

THE CAREER OF CONFUCIUS

Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.)—a Chinese philosopher and teacher whose ideas and teachings influenced Chinese (and other Asian countries') government, society, and culture

Lu—the state in which Confucius was born; located in modern-day Shandong Province

Confucius was very active in politics and his service to the government. In his home state of Lu, he served in minor government posts. Even though he worked hard, Confucius was often frustrated with politics. Confucius believed that people with talent and education had a duty to enter political service. However, during Confucius' lifetime, those with talent and education were not always the ones who succeeded in politics. On the contrary, those who allied themselves with people in power and who flattered others to get ahead were often the ones who advanced quickly in their careers. Throughout his career though Confucius' love for learning never died, and he continued his studies in fields such as rituals and music. At the age of 56, Confucius decided to leave politics when he realized that his superiors were not interested in his ideas and were not going to listen to what he had to say.

Confucius then left the country and traveled in other states, looking for a leader who was willing to listen to his ideas and put them into practice. He continued to teach, and unlike the schools of his time, Confucius taught anyone who was willing and able to learn. He was not concerned with whether his students were members of the nobility. During his travels, Confucius was unable to find a government that would actually put his ideas into practice. At the age of 67, he returned to his home state of Lu to write and teach. He died at the age of 73.

GROUP TASK

1. With your group, discuss the paragraph. List the three most important points of the paragraph.
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2. Illustrate each point on a separate sheet of paper. Your illustrations will be added to the class timeline. You can include words on your illustrations. Make sure you write in large letters so that everyone in the room can see.
3. Include these points on your individual timelines.
4. Prepare a short presentation about your illustrations. Your presentation should include
 - a description of each illustration
 - its importance
 - the date (if used)